

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4296

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 708

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JO, IS

SUBJ: WEST BANK ATTITUDE TOWARD RECENT DISCUSSION OF
PALESTINIAN STATE

SUMMARY: RECENT DEBATE ABOUT PALESTINIAN STATE, STEMMING MAINLY FROM ZAYYAT'S SECURITY COUNCIL STATEMENT, HAS AROUSED LITTLE SERIOUS INTEREST ON WEST BANK. PALESTINIANS LIVING UNDER OCCUPATION HAVE DEVELOPED GOOD SENSE FOR WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAVE REAL EFFECT ON THEIR SITUATION AND WHAT IS NOT. AT MOST IT HAS BROUGHT SOME RENEWED INTEREST IN CONCEPT THAT ALWAYS HAS APPEAL FOR A PEOPLE THAT VIEWS ALL THE MORE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVES WITH MISGIVINGS. END SUMMARY.

1. ARABIC DAILY "AL KUDS" INTERPRETS ZAYYAT'S REMARKS IN BROADEST SENSE AS MEANING THAT PALESTINIANS SHOULD HAVE VOICE IN THEIR OWN DESTINY. PAPER WELCOMES THIS AS COUNTER TO WHAT IT SEES AS ISRAELI EFFORT TO DENY EXISTENCE OF A PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

"AL KUDS" EXPRESSES UNDERSTANDING FOR REACTIONS OF JORDAN AND PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS, BUT SAYS IT BELIEVES EGYPT'S STAND IS ACTUALLY TO PUT RESPONSIBILITY ON UN TO CARRY OUT SENSE OF 1947 RESOLUTION AND EXPOSE ISRAEL AS "HAVING SWALLOWED ITS TWIN
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SISTER." PAPER IS AT SOME PAINS TO DEMONSTRATE WHY ZAYYAT'S

STATEMENTS SHOULD NOT BE BASIS FOR INTRA-ARAB DISPUTE.

2. COMMENTS OF INTERESTED WEST BANKERS HAVE BEEN SIMILARLY BLAND. AZIZ SHEHADEH, ADVOCATE OF WEST BANK STATE IN EARLY POST-67 PERIOD, TOOK SOME SATISFACTION FROM EGYPTIAN GAMBIT. HE THOUGHT THIS ARAB SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD HELP GIVE THE LIE TO THOSE WHO HAD CLAIMED IDEA WAS BASICALLY ISRAELI PROJECT. SHEIKH ALI JA'ABARI, MAYOR OF HEBRON, TOLD US HE FAVORED WEST BANK ENTITY BUT WENT ON TO SAY IT COULD NOT BE VIABLE UNLESS IT HAD CLOSE TIES WITH BOTH JORDAN AND ISRAEL AND ACTED AS BRIDGE BETWEEN THEM. HUSSEIN'S UAK IDEA COULD BE BASIS FOR THIS, BUT WEST BANK COULD AS WELL BE FEDERATED WITH ISRAEL. OTHERS HAVE ASSERTED TO US THAT COMMON PEOPLE OF WEST BANK, AS DISTINCT FROM LEADERSHIP, GENERALLY FAVOR INDEPENDENT ENTITY, PRIMARILY WE JUDGE AS REFLECTION CONTINUED UNHAPPINESS WITH AMMAN REGIME. THERE IS GOOD DEAL OF TRUTH IN THIS THOUGH WE DOUBT IT STRONG ENOUGH OPINION TO HAVE MUCH PRACTICAL EFFECT. THESE PEOPLE WILL HAVE FOUND SOME SLIGHT ENCOURAGEMENT IN ZAYYAT'S REMARKS, TO EXTENT THEY WERE AWARE OF THEM.

3. COMMENT: IN ABSENCE OF ANY MOVEMENT TOWARD REMOVAL OF ISRAELI RULE, WHICH IS WHAT WEST BANKERS SEEK IN FIRST INSTANCE, THEY TEND VIEW DISCUSSION OF NATURE OF POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD FOLLOW SUCH DEVELOPMENT AS RATHER ACADEMIC. THIS NO LESS TRUE OF LATEST IDEAS SURFACED BY ZAYYAT AND BOURGUIBA THAN IT WAS OF HUSSEIN'S UAK PROPOSAL. SINCE SUCH PROPOSALS NOT SEEN AS HAVING ANY PRACTICAL EFFECT, AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE, THEY DO NOT EVOKE STRONG REACTION ONE WAY OR OTHER.
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